(b) The request of State Government is under consideration.

(c) Following actions are taken for future protection of environment and sandalwood forests:

(i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India;

(ii) Externally Aided Projects are being implemented for preservation of forests and forest wealth;

(iii) Guidelines have been issued to all the State Governments to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests through Joint Forest Management;

(iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest lands:

Poaching in Nandan Kanan Biological Park and Shimilipal National Park

633. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the increasing incidents of poaching of birds and animals in Nandan Kanan Biological Park and in Shimilipal National Park in Orissa; and

(b) if so, the details of steps taken to stop such illegal activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) No incidents of poaching have been reported from Nandan Kanan Biological Park. The number of animals that are reported to have poached in the Shimilipal National Park during the year 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 are 10,3 and 1 respectively which indicates that there has not been any increase in the incidents of poaching.

(b) Following steps have been taken to stop poaching:-

(i) 30 units of anti-poaching camps are established,

(ii) Regular patrolling has been done by the mobile units of protection staff, as a result the traditional Akhandsikar has been stopped last year,

(iii) Two platoons of armed police reserve force have been deployed to assist the forest staff in Shimilipal area.

(iv) Awareness among the surrounding villagers are created to help, preserve wildlife with assistance of Non Governmental Organisations.

Electrocution of endangered animal species around Hastinapur bird Sanctuary

634. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of endangered species of animals around Hastinapur Bird Sanctuary are being killed by electrocution by villagers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by Govenment to prevent it; and

(d) the number of persons punished in this connection so far and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and(b) No Sir, during the last four years only six cases of killing of animals by electrocution have been reported.

(c) Patrolling in the area have been intensified to prevent such incidents.

(d) 19 persons were arrested, out of which 7 cases were compounded by the department, remaining 12 persons are undergoing trial in the court.

Killing of Wild Animals

635. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item that appeared in the Hindustan Times dated 8th November, 1998 under the caption "Feast of wild animals—warrant against Minister's crony', wherein it